

# THE ZOOLOGIST.

THIRD SERIES.

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VOL. VII.]

OCTOBER, 1883.

[No. 82.]

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## AN AUTUMN VISIT TO SPITZBERGEN.

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IN the autumn of last year (1882) I paid a second visit to Spitzbergen. The contrast, not only between the midnight sun of the first voyage and the dark nights of the second, but more especially between the teeming millions of birds seen during the first and the few isolated stragglers which had ventured to brave for a few weeks longer than the mass of their congeners the inclement climate of a Spitzbergen autumn, seen during the second, was so striking, that I may perhaps supplement my former paper (*Zool.* 1882, pp. 321, 378, 404) on a summer voyage to Spitzbergen, by giving some account of what was to be found in that country towards the close of the season.

M. Charles Rabot, a French gentleman,\* and I chartered the walrus-hunting smack (or, to be strictly accurate, "jagt"), the 'Cecilie Malène' (gross tonnage 40, length between uprights 58 feet), Captain M. E. Arnesen, of Tromsø, and weighed thence in tow of a steamer, as it was dead calm, late on the evening of August 26th.

August 27. Temperature,† 8.30 p.m., atmospheric pressure 750·2, air 53° 42' F., surface water 51·8 F.—During the morning, as we were towed and afterwards sailed out of the sounds, saw a

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\* Chargé d'une Mission Scientifique par le Ministre de l'Instruction publique de France.

† The temperature was taken by M. Rabot. I have left the readings of the atmospheric pressure in mètres and decimals, as he recorded it; the temperature of the air and water I have reduced from centigrade to Fahrenheit.

few Black Guillemots and Herring Gulls, one or two Greater Black-backed, and I think a few Common Gulls. When nearly clear of L'uglö, on port side, and Arnö, to starboard, began to see Fulmar Petrels, two or three Puffins, and an occasional Kittiwake. Directly we had cleared the north point of Arnö, we began to pass numerous Fulmars, a few Puffins (generally in twos or threes), and Kittiwakes. During the evening Fulmars were decidedly numerous; we saw probably two or three hundred or more. Kittiwakes generally in parties of from two to three up to seven or eight. As we passed the Indre- and Ydre-Gjøesböen Shoals we saw a flock of several thousand gulls on each, apparently Kittiwakes; they were probably feeding on Coal-fish, *Merlangus carbonarius*, Cuvier. About five whales seen during the day, probably all Sibbald's Rorquals; the last was rather a large one, and we could hear him blowing distinctly when more than a mile off. One of the others kept putting its nose right out of the water. Twice during the afternoon a Purple Sandpiper flew close round us, and seemed desirous to come on board, as if, perhaps, tired after migration from Spitzbergen.

August 28. Lat. at noon,  $71^{\circ} 21' N.$ , long.  $20^{\circ} 0' E.$  of Greenwich. Temperature, 0.15 p.m., press. 749.6, air  $53.24^{\circ} F.$ , surface water  $50.36^{\circ} F.$ ; 7 p.m., press. 748.9, air  $50.72^{\circ}$ , water  $49.1^{\circ}$ ; 11.40 p.m., air  $51.8^{\circ}$ .—Arnesen saw a large "Blaa Hval" (probably Sibbald's Rorqual) early in the morning, about lat.  $70^{\circ} 55'$ . Kittiwakes, almost all adults, in twos and threes, and sixes or sevens, flying past us all day, as directly south as they could fly, though swerving a little out of their course to see if there was anything to be picked up from the smack, and then resuming their course. Wind light all day from about S.E. A few Fulmars, but not perhaps above two dozen all day. A pair of Puffins in the afternoon were no doubt *Fratercula arctica*. In the evening we heard what we took to be Guillemots (Common or Brünnich's) calling to their young, apparently an adult and young on each side of the smack.

August 29. Lat. at noon,  $72^{\circ} 25' N.$ , long. E. G.  $19^{\circ} 8'$ ; press., noon, 749.9.—From 8 a.m. blowing fresh from N.E. Arnesen called my attention to a bird swimming near us, which somewhat resembled a young Guillemot, except that it appeared to be dusky black all over. I could not satisfy myself as to its identity. A few Fulmars and Kittiwakes during the day.

August 30. Lat. at noon,  $72^{\circ} 55' N.$ , long. E. G.  $15^{\circ} 47'$ .—The wind shifted to N.W. this morning, still blowing very fresh. A few Fulmars were the only birds I noticed. In the evening squalls and sleet showers. Blowing half a gale during the night.

August 31.—Still blowing hard, with sleet at intervals, all day. A solitary Puffin and a few Fulmars were the only birds observed.

September 1. Lat. at noon,  $74^{\circ} 45'$ , long. E. G.  $16^{\circ} 20'$ . Temperature, 2 p.m., press. 750.9, air 32.9, water 34.34; 8 p.m., press. 752.9, air 30.56, water 34.34.—The wind fell about 4 this morning. Sighted Bear Island, bearing S.E., about thirty-two miles, about 8. Arnesen saw a "Blaa Hval" an hour later, and shortly afterwards we got up to much drift-ice. Had to turn first W. and later to S.W. to get round the riband of ice. About 3.30, just as we reached the westernmost point of the ice, we saw a "Blaa Hval" close to the ice, and the spout of one or more just beyond. Half an hour later we turned N.W., but the light air from the east failing, we had to lower a boat, and tow the "jagt" away from the ice. Saw during the day a good many Fulmars and Kittiwakes, about a dozen Arctic Terns, two or three dozen Little Auks, six or eight Guillemots (most likely Brünnich's), a good many Glaucous Gulls (mostly young of the previous year), and several Skuas (all, I believe, white-breasted Richardson's).

September 2. Lat. at noon,  $74^{\circ} 42'$ , long. E. G.  $15^{\circ} 50'$ . Temperature, 2.45 p.m., press. 752.5, air 33.8, water 37.4 (= Gulf-stream).—Calm continued; drifted a little southwards. An occasional Fulmar, now and then a Kittiwake, and during the forenoon I saw one Brünnich's Guillemot flying about north. While Arnesen was playing his accordion on deck in the evening a Puffin, *Fratercula glacialis*, as if attracted by the music, flew two or three times round the vessel, and finally settled in the water close to us, and remained there for a long time.

September 3. Lat. at noon,  $75^{\circ} 27'$ , long. E. G.  $16^{\circ} 47'$ . Temperature, 2 p.m., press. 751, air 35.6, water 32.9; 8 p.m., press. 749.5, air 33.8, water 32.36.—A S.W. breeze sprang up at 2 a.m. and continued through the day. At twenty minutes past noon saw a whale spouting two or three miles off on our starboard quarter, and immediately afterwards a smaller whale (the "Blaa Hval" again)—forty feet long or so, at a guess—crossed close under our stern, within gun-shot. Two hours later, saw a pair of Skuas, which were possibly *Stercorarius longicaudus*, but I could

not be certain. A good many Fulmars and Kittiwakes during the forenoon. Two or three Richardson's Skuas; no Glaucous Gulls; three Brünnich's Guillemots together, one being a young bird, and two or three more of this species afterwards; a few Little Auks during the day.

September 4. Lat. at noon,  $76^{\circ} 27'$ , long. E. G.  $19^{\circ} 5'$ . Temperature, 8 a.m., press. 749, air  $33.08$ , water  $30.92$ ; noon, press. 749, air  $35.96$ , water  $30.92$ .—At 3 a.m., Syd Kap, Spitzbergen, sighted; at 4 it bore N. four miles. A good deal of drift-ice about, and one veritable berg—computed by Arnesen to be thirty or forty feet above the water—passed us some distance off to starboard, coming from the east side of Spitzbergen. We passed close to a piece not less than ten feet above the water, and all sizes less than this. As our object was to attempt to reach Hope Island, in hope of "fangst" ("game" perhaps gives the English equivalent of the word, or, in the case of amateur hunters like ourselves, "sport"), our course now lay to the east. We had to tack once or twice to avoid pack-ice, and at 4.45 p.m. went about to W. by S. to avoid the pack, and half an hour later, a fog having come on,—so thick that we could not see the length of the vessel in any direction,—we laid her aback, and she slowly drifted in an E.S.E. direction. At 8 p.m. we had to make sail again, to avoid the pack to the S.S.E. of us, and then, at 11 p.m., laid her aback again. A few Fulmars, Little Auks, and Kittiwakes during the day. We steered during the greater part of the day E., to about long.  $21^{\circ} 50'$ , when we encountered the pack trending about N. by W., S. by E.

September 5. Lat. at noon,  $77^{\circ} 10'$ , long. E. G.  $20^{\circ} 50'$ . Temperature, noon, press. 753.5, air  $32.36$ , water  $28.76$ ; 0.45 p.m., full sunshine, press. do., air  $33.62$ , water do.; 8.25 p.m., press. 754.5, air  $31.82$ , water do.—A real Arctic summer's day. At 3 a.m. sailed N. by W.; at 4 turned N.N.W. for eight miles; at 6 altered our course to about N. by E. Edge Island, otherwise known as Stans Foreland, was sighted about 8 a.m., Whale Point being the first headland seen, and shortly afterwards Negro Point (= Black Point). Half an hour later Hope Island was sighted. The true position of this island has been ascertained (by, I think, Graf Wilczek) to have its southwesternmost point in N. lat.  $76^{\circ} 29'$ , long. E. G.  $25^{\circ}$ , instead of the position further to the N.E. in which it appears in the charts.



On the authority of Kjeldsen, one of the ice pilots from Tromsø, who was with us in 1881, most of the islands off the south coast of Edge's Land are rather vaguely placed on the chart; Halfmoon Island should be where Menke Island is shown, King Ludwig Islands should be immediately south of the assigned position of the Arendts Islands, &c. We kept along the edge of the pack all the forenoon, sailing among drift-ice, some of it of a heavy description. We found Hope Island and the Thousand Isles lying well inside the pack, which extended westwards to about the twentieth degree of east longitude up to about eight English miles south of Whale Point, whence it trended away to the west, filling Stor Fjord as far as could be seen from the "crow's-nest." Saw one young Mandt's Guillemot in the forenoon, the first example of that species seen this voyage; also saw in the course of the day one Northern Puffin, two Richardson's Skuas, two or three each of Glaucous Gulls and Kittiwakes, several Fulmars, and two or three dozen Little Auks; one *Phoca barbata* and about eight or nine *P. hispida*. We sounded when Whale Point bore north half east by compass about twelve miles (English), and found twenty-three fathoms (= 140 feet), soft, rich brown mud—so soft that the lead, a small light one, stuck very tight in it. Sounded again about about two English miles nearer Whale Point, and found twenty-seven fathoms, same bottom. It was impossible to land anywhere on this coast, as the ice was about eight miles broad all along it and quite compact, though rotten at the outer edge, so that one could not cross it on foot. It is, of course, possible that, if we had waited, the ice might have eventually shifted sufficiently to allow of our advance; but time was precious, as we were anxious to deliver the mail we had on board to the Swedish Meteorological Expedition at Cap Thordsen in Is Fjord, on the west coast. We therefore reluctantly decided to stand to the west and make for the east coast of Spitzbergen proper. We could see King Ludvig's Islands and the highest cliff of Negro Point, over a local fog, until long after we had headed west, but Hope Island was only visible for a short time early in the morning, and was soon hidden by fog. So much of the coast of Edge Island as we saw lies high; the King Ludvig Islands lie low.

September 6. Lat. at noon,  $76^{\circ} 58'$ , long. E. G.  $18^{\circ} 10'$ . Temperature, noon, press 752, air  $32.9$ , water  $32.36$ .—Snow fell soon after midnight. Early in the morning Arnesen saw four young

Mandt's Guillemots, and in the middle of the day I saw one adult example, the first seen this voyage; a few Fulmars and Kittiwakes, but did not notice any Little Auks to-day. In the afternoon a young Kittiwake came flying about the ship, and finally settled on the deck. M. Rabot, who came on deck at the moment, gave chase, and presently clapped his sou'wester over it. We cut its wing and deposited it in the "fangst-baad" which lay in-board. Fog all day, so that though we were only (on the average) about ten English miles off the east coast we saw nothing of the land until about 9 p.m., when it was visible for a few minutes, and again about an hour later, when South Cape became visible. During the first part of the afternoon there was a slight thaw, and every rattle of the rigging brought down showers of ice; later on rain fell and lasted through the remainder of the afternoon. We met two floes and much loose ice during the morning, but got gradually clear of it as we proceeded south, though an occasional large piece of fresh-water ice was still met with, and we nearly ran into a large black piece about 10.30 that night, which caused no little excitement for a few minutes, as we mistook it in the darkness for a rock. Three or four Ringed Seals passed during the day.

September 7. Lat. at noon,  $76^{\circ} 48'$ , long. E. G.  $15^{\circ} 10'$ . Temperature, 2.20 p.m., press. 743.6, air 33.24, water 33.8.—We doubled South Cape just after midnight, and altered our course; soon afterwards the wind freshened to a half-gale from N.E. by E. until 4 a.m., when it fell light. The young Kittiwake was found dead this morning, having evidently been in a bad way before it settled on the deck and allowed itself to be captured. Rain nearly all the morning. We were opposite the entrance to Horn Sound about 5 p.m. Wind very light from N.N.W.; a long swell from the west showed that a westerly wind was blowing further out in the North Atlantic. Early in the morning Arnesen saw plenty of Eider Ducks and young and Brent Geese and young, the latter species being close alongside. During the afternoon Kittiwakes were very numerous, hovering close astern, and several flying right over the deck. A little to the north of Horn Sound saw about eight Geese, probably Pink-footed, flying southwards. Later on three or four Eider Ducks flying in company; a Fulmar or two almost constantly in sight. One Ringed Seal seen in the afternoon. The rain stopped between 4 and 5 p.m., and the sun came out, making things much pleasanter.

September 8. Lat. at noon,  $77^{\circ} 12'$ , long. E. G.  $14^{\circ} 50'$ . Temperature, noon, press. 736.2, air 35.6, water 35.24; 8 p.m., press. 737, air 35.6, water 35.6.—This morning found us slowly working our way north, with a light S.S.W. wind. We were opposite the south side of the entrance to Bell Sound about 1 p.m. Light rain and fog all day. About 8 p.m., while I was below, a bird was observed swimming, and presently dived out of sight, which our harpooner pronounced to be an "Imber" (*i.e.* a Great Northern Diver), a new bird to the Spitzbergen list. He was quite confident it was not a "Lom" (*i.e.* the Black-throated or Red-throated species), being so much bigger, and adding, as it were in self-defence, that he knew the bird well from seeing them so often in Norway. The Red-throated is the only species of *Colymbus* hitherto recorded from Spitzbergen. M. Rabot saw the bird, and confirmed the harpooner's description of it. Saw during the day a single example of each of Richardson's Skua, Brünnich's Guillemot, and Puffin, and a few Kittiwakes and Fulmars, but not many. No Little Auks.

September 9.—Entered Is Fjord early in the morning, and anchored in Green Harbour 8.30 a.m., and found about seventeen Norwegian smacks, sloops, &c., anchored there, engaged in cod-fishing. A Skua which I saw at this time looked like *S. longicaudus*, but I could not be sure. I went off with Arnesen and two men, by boat, to look for Johan Dreyer, of Tromsø, who had established himself with two other men in a hut constructed of a boat reversed, at a point called Russe Kjøeler, near the entrance to the Fjord; he was not there, however, and we heard afterwards that he had been taken off by a vessel a few days before our arrival. On our way we passed a great many boats from the various smacks busily engaged cod-fishing. Arnesen had charge of numerous letters to members of their crews, and we visited some of the smacks to deliver them; others were given to the men in the boats; one skipper gave Arnesen four large codfish, just caught, in exchange for a letter from his wife. Soon after starting I caught sight of a pair of Loms (*Colymbus*) close in to the west shore; they allowed us to get tolerably close, and I believe I wounded one, but before I could fire the second barrel the bird flew off in a straight line from the bow of the boat, and as I was rowing *three* I could not fire without killing the man rowing bow, and by the time the boat's head was turned a little to one side it

was too far off for my shot to be effectual, which I much regretted, as I thus failed to add a new species to the list of birds killed in Spitzbergen, for I am quite confident these were Black-throated Divers, and the harpooner, who was rowing bow, was, independently, of the same opinion. His remarks *à propos* of the present birds helped to strengthen my belief that he was correct in his identification of the bird he saw the day before as a Great Northern Diver. Some short distance further on we came to a pair of Red-throated Divers, one of which I succeeded in bagging. On subsequently visiting the 'Isbjörn,'\* to deliver some letters, her captain (Steenerssen), seeing it lying in the boat, remarked that it was not an "every-day (*i. e.* common) capture" (= *en hverdags fangst*), but that he himself shot one (presumably this species) the week before, but had eaten it. We saw and heard several more Divers subsequently during this day's excursion. I do not know the difference in the cry of the different species, but believe that at least a pair which were flying at a considerable height over us, when ashore near the mouth of the Fjord, were Black-throated. Fulmars were plentiful as we rowed past the smacks; I secured a couple of adult specimens, the second of which we tried to capture with a bent pin and piece of string, and should no doubt have succeeded if we had had a tougher bait than cod-liver, which would not hold to the pin. Finally, frightening it to a more respectable distance, I killed it with a charge of small shot. The sandstone rocks near the point of the promontory called the "Fort" (= *Festning*), certainly deserve the name, looking exactly like an artificially-built fort of masonry. A small low-lying rock off the Fort was completely covered with Kittiwakes and Arctic Terns: after a search I discovered one immature specimen among the latter, so shot it, killing a Kittiwake at the same discharge. We landed first on the eastern side of Cape Staratschin, and looked for fossils and plants. I collected a good many of the latter, but found hardly any fossils, and no birds, but saw tracks of foxes on the snow two or three times. We therefore returned to the boat and rowed a good bit further west. We landed again

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\* The well-known sloop in which Graf Wilczek made his pioneer voyage in connection with the Tegetthof Expedition; and in which, later, Captain Markham and Sir Henry Gore Booth made the voyage an account of which was published by the former as 'A Polar Reconnaissance.'



just beyond the mouth of a little river, and made for a fresh-water lake lying at some distance—perhaps an English mile—inland (something like eight miles from the anchorage where the smack lay). We again found no birds, but an unlimited quantity of sub-fossil marine mussel-shells of two species, of which the larger was the commoner. I do not think I am exaggerating in saying that a great many of these lay 100 feet, or even more above the present level of the lake, which again is—I am afraid to guess how high above the present level of the sea, but it must, I think, be more than *one* hundred feet. These masses of shells which lay above the level of the lake had not, I think, attained that position by the upheaval of the land, but by being washed there, perhaps in quite recent times, by the overflowing waters from the lake at the time of the melting of the winter's snow, as they were deposited at all levels, up to the height guessed at, on the sides of the river-bed. They had, of course, reached the bed of the present fresh-water tarn before that was raised out of the sea. In the shallow water at the edge of the lake, where it flows into the river, we saw two or three small fish. We had, unfortunately, no hand-net with us, and all our efforts to secure either of them were in vain. The largest was about six inches long, or hardly so much; the smallest would be perhaps two inches and a quarter. I believe the only fresh-water fish known in any part of the Arctic regions are species of *Salmo*. These looked to me rather *deep* for such small specimens of *Salmo*, but did not get a sufficiently distinct sight of them to be able to form any opinion. We followed the course of the little river back to the coast. On the beach at this point the harpooner found two pieces of hard stone with a surface perfectly planed and polished by the action of ice. On the way back, at a place where the cliffs were not more than a dozen feet or so high, we landed at a miniature coal-mine cropping out in the cliff-face; a little vein of coal, about a yard or less broad by not more than four or five feet deep, and rather less than a yard from the surface. The coal, of which I have specimens, is very soft and crumbly, and can only be quarried in the shape of small-coal. A boat's crew from one of the smacks at anchor in the harbour landed here, as we were leaving, to replenish their stock of fuel. I was told that on the east shore of the harbour, opposite to where we then were, excellent coal may be obtained in large lumps. There is coal for some distance along the west side,

but not of good quality, this little vein being probably the best. Kittiwakes were tolerably numerous during the day in places; a few Glaucous Gulls, most being immature, one of which the harpooner shot with his rifle; no Guillemots (either species), Puffins, or Little Auks; one or two Richardson's Skuas; two or three Terns, besides those on the Skerry previously mentioned. Saw several Purple Sandpipers and shot one, as I could not clearly identify it. Eiders very few and far between, but I saw one party of several dozen ducks flying; no drakes seen. On a conspicuous headland inside the Fort there is now to be seen a small cross of iron, erected by the Swedish Expedition a few weeks previously, and underneath it the inscription, "På Konang Oscar II.'s Foranstalande"—i.e. "by direction of King Oscar II." When in smooth water inside the Fort, in about two fathoms, took a sweep with the dredge, but only captured one small shrimp and a few tiny snails, &c. M. Rabot went this day in the other boat in the opposite direction, up the harbour, and had unsuccessful shots at some very tame Arctic Foxes, and also at a great Seal. He shot a young Mandt's Guillemot, an Eider Duck and three ducklings, an Arctic Tern and a Purple Sandpiper, and slightly wounding another brought it on board alive, where we kept it for about a couple of days, until it disappeared either overboard or down the hold. He and his boat's crew saw a bird which one of the seamen believed to be a Greenland Eider (= King Eider). He obtained some red snow from a mountain which he ascended. In the evening we went off again in a boat, and after a haul of the dredge, which produced two small Lump-suckers, two *Echini*, a few small shrimps, star-fish and tiny snails, we proceeded up the harbour to the site of the old Russian house. Presently a splash quite close to the boat showed where a Ringed Seal had come up, but discovering the boat so close popped down again at once. Saw several Purple Sandpipers. Ashore were several barrels not headed up containing "beef" of bear, reindeer, and seal-flesh. Pieces of wood, &c., lying on the beach were at this time (about 9.30 p.m.) slightly frozen to the ground. We recognised the mountain to which this beach forms the foreground as the one figured, in the 'Voyage of the Vega,' as "a Reindeer pasture, Green Harbour" (vol. i. p. 136). With the exception of a big lump or two floating in the offing, there was no ice whatever in the bay at this time—perfectly open water.

September 10. Temperature, 11 p.m., air 32°.—We weighed about 2 p.m., the sails being then all frozen; the wind came tolerably fresh from the west, but at 4 it suddenly dropped round to the N.E., causing us to beat slowly up the Fjord. Saw two or three young Mandt's Guillemots close to the ship, three Puffins, and an occasional Fulmar and Kittiwake. In the afternoon saw a Brünnich's Guillemot and young, and there may have been a second couple. Our progress being very slow, Rabot went off to the coast in the boat, and took some photographs. He shot a Glaucous Gull, and saw numerous Skuas.

September 11. Temperature, 0.30 p.m., press. 761.4, air 28.58, water 38.84.—Cold N.E. breeze; all day beating up towards the Middle Hook, on our way to visit the Swedish Meteorological Expedition, and take them their last batch of letters and newspapers. M. Rabot and I each secured a young Mandt's Guillemot. Two (or more) others were seen, and an occasional Fulmar; one Puffin. I did not, I believe, see a single Kittiwake to-day. One Ringed Seal in the afternoon.

September 12.—Although the house at Cap Thordsen had been visible for a short time at 10 a.m. on the 11th, we only anchored off there about 1.15 this morning. Soon after 8 we landed. The landing-place is simply an open beach, opposite a cleft in the low cliff which forms the background (about 164 feet high), and a very awkward place in bad weather, as we found out before we again set foot on the 'Cecilie.' On the top of the cliff is a large storehouse overflowing with supplies of every kind, including tons of provisions generously sent out by Mr. Oscar Dickson for the use of Mr. Leigh Smith's party in case they had retreated that way, and of whose safety we had the satisfaction of informing the Swedes, the news having reached Tromsö just before we sailed, coming from Hammerfest, where the schooner chartered by Sir Allen Young to assist the 'Hope' in her search for the 'Eira's' crew had returned some days after the 'Hope' had reached Scotland. From here to the dwelling-house the ground gently rises, and a tramway between the two buildings—a distance as the tram runs of about one mile 260 yards\*—facilitates the

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\* In the notice of this visit which appeared in the 'Proceedings of the Geographical Society,' December, 1882, the distance, by some error, is called "nearly four miles."

transporting of stores. On our way up we met with great numbers of Snow Buntings. Behind the house the ground rises abruptly to low Fjeld, averaging about 820 feet. The Swedish Meteorological Expedition had not intended to establish themselves here (N. lat.  $78^{\circ} 28' 27''$ , long. E. G.  $15^{\circ} 49' 30''$ ), but at Mossel Bay (about N. lat.  $79^{\circ} 50'$  and long. E. G.  $16^{\circ}$ ), but, as has been already recorded in various publications, the two gunboats under the command of Capt. Palander, which brought out the Expedition, were prevented by the ice from rounding the N.W. point of Spitzbergen. This house has a curious and melancholy history, which it would take too long to narrate in detail, but is briefly as follows:—It was built in 1872 by a company started in Göteborg for working the coprolites which abound here. A very large quantity of materials and stores were sent out, and a party of workmen (two of whom were even accompanied by their wives). On setting to work, however, they found it impossible to work the stone, in consequence of the ground being so hard-frozen,\* a fact which one would have thought might have been ascertained in ten minutes, before they had gone to the expense of bringing out all this material. The scheme was abandoned, and the men returned home, leaving the house and stores behind them. Four "fangst" vessels lay fast in the ice off Grey Hook (on the north coast) that autumn, and seventeen men belonging to them left in boats and made for Cap Thordsen, knowing of the house and stores there, and not knowing that the people had left. One of the vessels subsequently got away, and brought home all the remaining men, with the exception of the captain and cook of one of them, who chose to remain—but only to die during the winter. Three relief expeditions were organized for the rescue of these men, the second vessel to go being the 'Isbjörn,' commanded by Kjeldsen, with Halvorsen, our harpooner of the 'Cecilie,' under him. They failed, however, to penetrate to Cap Thordsen, and nothing was known of the unfortunate men until the following June, when the late Capt. Mack, of Tromsø, landed there, and found two men buried at some distance from the house, fourteen lying dead just outside the door, and the last survivor (a Sea-Lap) seated at the table indoors, but also long since dead. Mack buried the fifteen bodies in one large grave

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\* The present expedition found the ground frozen in August at ten centimetres (less than four inches) below the surface.



close to the house, and placed over it a board with the inscription, "Her under hviler Stovet af 15 Mand, som døde her Foraaret 1873. Fred med eders stov"—i. e. "Hereunder rest the remains of fifteen men, who died here in the spring of 1873. Peace with their remains." We were received with the greatest hospitality by the members of the Expedition, and spent a most pleasant day with them, in this the only inhabited house in all Spitzbergen, and inspected the observatories, &c. The Swedes had brought with them two pointers, six tame Lapland reindeer (one of which had been killed for the table before our visit), three pigs, and twelve pigeons, one of which last had disappeared a few days previously, and as Arnesen and some of the crew of the Expedition while standing near the dovecot in the afternoon observed a falcon stoop at one of the pigeons, which the men saved by shouting and waving their arms, the fate of the lost pigeon may be conjectured. An Arctic Fox had taken up its abode under the house, and seemed to consider itself quite under the protection of the Expedition. Observations began on August 15th, except with the anemometer and anemoscope, which yet remained to be fixed at the date of our visit. The spot chosen for these, on the Fjeld behind the house, is 826 feet above the sea level, and about 570 yards distant from the house. The astronomical observatory is about 280 feet and the magnet-house about 240 feet above the sea. Observations are taken every hour, the watches of the observers being—from 1 a.m. to 4 a.m.; 5 a.m. to 8 a.m.; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.; 9 p.m. to 12 p.m. The thermometer cage contains two wet and two dry thermometers, one Saussure's hygrometer, and one evaporimeter. The anemometer is by Robinson, and marks with an electric register made by Herr Andrée, one of the members of the Expedition, at Cap Thordsen. The International Circumpolar Expeditions of Denmark, Russia, Germany, Holland, Austria, and Sweden have similar instruments, by Edelmann, of Munich. Some distance west of the house Lieut. Stjernspetz and I, while taking a walk in the afternoon, found a large whale's rib, partly imbedded in shingle about forty feet above the present high-water mark. We saw a few Fulmars along the coast, and several Pink-footed Geese, a young specimen of which the Lieutenant shot, the others keeping well out of reach. Cast-horns of Reindeer were lying about in numbers; I picked up and kept a few of the best met with. After an excellent dinner we took

charge of numerous letters to be posted on our return to regions where such an institution exists, and finally started for the coast by express train, accompanied by some of the members of the Expedition. It was a strange sensation to rattle along so fast down hill, in the darkness of night, on an Arctic coast, where the hard frozen ground made everything reverberate to an astonishing extent. On arrival at the lower end of the tramway it began to snow, and we had some difficulty in attracting the attention of the watch on board, as, besides being very dark, it was now blowing a gale directly on shore, so that when at length the boat came for us it was impossible to bring it close in to the beach, but it was backed in on the breakers as near as was practicable, and we had to make a run for it through the surf, one at a time, and tumble into the boat as best we could. We arrived on board at 11.30, and the smack was rolling so heavily that before we could secure the boat she was stove as she hung at the davit falls. Shortly afterwards the smack took to rolling so heavily as to take in water over the deck on each side in turn.

September 13. Temperature, 9.20 a.m., press. 753.8, air 33.8, water 37.4.—The snow storm continued through the night and until nine in the morning, by which time, the weather having moderated, the snow was lying about six inches deep on deck. We got under weigh as soon as possible, running up our flags and firing a parting salute in return for a salute from the shore. Wind E.N.E. fresh, to start with, and in spite of various shifts, including a calm, we gradually advanced up Sassen Bay and anchored that evening in the snuggest situation that offered, a good way in on the south side. The noise of the cable running out disturbed a Diver, which was, I have no doubt, of the Red-throated species.

September 14. — Landed with two seamen for Reindeer hunting. An hour's row brought us nearly to the head of the Fjord, where we hauled the boat up. After only about three-quarters of an hour's walk we saw seven deer on the upper terrace of the raised beach on the south side of a big valley which runs up from the head of the Fjord; however, we made a mess of our stalk by overshooting the mark, and they escaped. Almost immediately afterwards we caught sight of a covey of ten Ptarmigan running ahead of us (we had previously seen some while we were stalking the deer); I exchanged my rifle for my

shot-gun, which one of the sailors was carrying, and followed them. Upon this they stopped and allowed me to shoot five, singly, and one of the seamen one with his rifle, in a most unsportsmanlike and cold-blooded manner; but then, while I was fumbling in my pockets for cartridges, the remaining four suddenly took wing. What made them start just then I hardly know, unless the fate of the other members of their family had just dawned upon them. We followed the spor of the deer, and after a bit found they had divided into two parties of four and three. We followed the four, as they included the best animals, and finally I secured the biggest buck (I guessed him to be four years old, total length 62 inches), the seaman who was armed with a rifle getting a smaller buck (supposed two years old, and measuring 59 inches). On our way back to the coast with the deer we came to a single Ptarmigan sitting. It allowed me to put down my load, put a cartridge in my gun, and "pot" it, without making any effort to escape. Just before we reached the boat we saw a pair of ducks with one young one on the shore edge; they took to the water and swam away before we had got close, and the men, on whom had fallen the chief share of carrying our spoils, were too tired for me to insist on giving chase in a direction exactly contrary to that in which the smack lay. During the time of getting the boat into the water and embarking ourselves and the game, I stupidly did not give these ducks a second thought, but when, some time later, I did think about them again, I was convinced that they were not Long-tailed Ducks, as I had at the time supposed them to be, as they were neither Common nor King Eiders, and the Long-tailed Duck is the only other duck known in Spitzbergen; nor were they anything like that species. On talking about them to one of the seamen who was with me I found him quite confident that they were not the "Havel" (= Longtailed Duck), but he did not know any name for the species. After our return to Tromsø I met this man in the Museum, and he tried to find the duck he meant, but unfortunately without success, but he was still equally sure that the specimens of Long-tailed Duck were not what he wanted. My own impression is that they were Velvet Scoters, *Ædemia fusca* (Linn.). This opinion was formed when I got back to the Museums of Norway, and confirmed when, on my return to England, I had access to books, and while the subject was still

tolerably fresh in my mind; but as it was not come to on the spot, and as it is a species, and even genus, entirely new to Spitzbergen, though common in Lapland and the north of Scandinavia generally, on the authority of Mr. Richard Dann (quoted by Yarrell, 'Brit. Birds,' iii. p. 316, 3rd edit.), and Dresser says it is "common in Northern Russia and Novara Zemlya," I do not wish to do more than mention the case for what it may be worth. A good many Fulmars were about the bay; one or two Glaucous Gulls; two or three Eiders. Much spor of large web-footed birds, probably Geese and Glaucous Gulls, in the snow all about the low ground near the sea, but no Geese seen until we were in the boat on our return journey, when a "skein" flew by, no doubt Pink-footed. A few young Mandt's Guillemots. Saw one Seal on our way back, probably a Ringed Seal, though it looked dark, like a Great Seal, of which species it may have been a young one. On arrival on board I found M. Rabot already returned; he had made the ascent of a mountain with one of the seamen, where the snow was so deep and soft that they had been obliged for some distance to go on all fours. I am afraid I should have hardly thought it worth the trouble.

September 15.—Just after I got out of bed this morning the Captain sent down word that there was a bird alongside which I ought to shoot. Hastening on deck, I shot a young Richardson's Skua, in mottled brown plumage, the only one seen during the voyage. Rabot and I went off Reindeer hunting, each taking one of the boats. Arnesen, one of the men, and I rowed some little way up the bay, and landing went above and behind the valley in which we had killed the deer the day before. Just after we landed we saw three Divers flying, but could not tell the species. We soon saw three deer,—buck, doe, and calf,—but they kept walking, hardly lingering at all, and we tried in vain to get up to them. At last, leaving the seamen to watch them, the Captain and I went down to lower ground to try and head them off. We noticed that three foxes in company had run heel on our tracks of yesterday, along a river-bed, scenting the Reindeer-blood. After a stiff scramble we succeeded in getting up to the deer, and I shot the buck and doe right and left; Arnesen then shot the calf. The buck, which I supposed to be three years old, measured 60 inches in total length, the doe 58 inches, and the calf (female) 45½ inches. The latter's horns were just showing through the skin, barely



three-quarters of an inch. To-day, after carrying our spoil on our backs some distance, the snow allowed of our dragging them—a much pleasanter way, I need hardly mention. On the way back saw a large flock of Snow Buntings, but they would not let me get a shot at them. No Ptarmigan seen to-day, but their tracks (probably yesterday's) were all about the big valley. We dragged the deer to the nearest point of the coast, and then fetched the boat to the spot. Though this was only a distance of some few hundred yards, we found as we approached that an adult Glaucous Gull was already helping himself to venison, and did not trouble himself to hurry his departure. Soon after starting in the boat on our way back we saw a trip of about fourteen geese flying; their tracks, as yesterday, were common on the snow in the big valley. M. Rabot reported having seen a Diver (*Colymbus*) and a Puffin to-day.

(To be continued.)

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#### ON A RARE AFRICAN PLOVER.

BY THE EDITOR.

WHEN staying at Leiden in May, 1870, for the purpose of examining the collection of *Limicolæ* in the fine Museum d'Histoire Naturelle des Pays Bas, I took sketches and descriptions of several rare species, some of which were at that time unique. Amongst others I particularly noticed a Ringed Plover which was labelled "*Charadrius indicus*, Latham; Nipaul, Hodgson." Turning to Prof. Schlegel's excellent Catalogue of the Museum (*Cursores*, p. 25) I found the specimen duly entered as "*Charadrius indicus*, Latham, nec Rüppell," with the remark, "*Habite l'Inde Continentale. Adulte, Nipaul, présenté par Mr. Hodgson*," a description with measurements being added. The specimen had long been unique, and remained so for many years subsequently; none of the Indian ornithologists being able to verify its existence in Nipaul, or to meet with it in any part of Continental India.

The reference made by Latham to Pennant's 'View of Hindostan,' 1798 (vol. ii. p. 159), throws no light on the question of habitat. Pennant's words (*l.c.*) are:—"The Golden Plover, Brit. Zool. ii. no. 208, is found here [Hindostan] from the very arctic

regions. The Indian Plover, Latham, vii. 254 [Gen. Syn.] does not exceed the size of a Lark."

These facts, coupled with its close resemblance to a better known African form, *Ægialitis tricollaris*, suggested to me the idea that there was an error in the locality assigned to it, and that if ever the species were rediscovered it would probably be found in some part of Africa.

The description of this specimen I noted as follows:—"Resembling *Æ. tricollaris* (Vieillot), but rather larger; bill rather more robust, and tarsus longer, 1·3 in. instead of 1·1 in. General coloration similar, but no white on the forehead. Two narrow black pectoral bands. Primaries dusky, as in *tricollaris*. Tail-feathers twelve; the two centre ones (as in *tricollaris*) the same colour as the back; the outer one on each side conspicuously



different; that in *tricollaris* having a single dark spot, or bar, on the inner web; that in *indicus* (so called) having four such bars on the inner web (lighter and smaller as they approach the base), and a single spot on the outer web of the same feather towards the extremity, as shown in the annexed cut, *a* and *b*. Base of bill and legs light-coloured, but the colour not determinable with certainty."

That the specimen in the Leiden Museum had been presented by Hodgson was doubtless true enough; but the mistake as to locality probably arose from assuming that, because it came from Hodgson, it must have been collected by him in the country with which his name has been so long and favourably associated. The

fact seems to have been overlooked that well-known collectors are frequently in the habit of receiving from their friends specimens from all parts of the world.

In the 'Catalogue of the Specimens and Drawings of Mammalia and Birds of Nepal and Thibet' presented by Hodgson to the British Museum, and printed by order of the Trustees in 1846, no mention of this Ringed Plover is to be found\*; and there can be no doubt that, had Hodgson procured it himself, it would have been certain, from its dissimilarity to all other species of *Ægialitis* found in India, to have attracted his particular attention, and to have found a place amongst his beautiful drawings of birds now in the British Museum. It may therefore be stated with some degree of certainty that the specimen of "*Charadrius indicus*, Latham," so called, in the Leiden Museum, although received from Hodgson, then resident in Nipaul, was not procured by him in that country.

Who, then, identified this specimen with *Charadrius indicus*, Latham? Was it so identified correctly? and was Latham's type procured in India, as the specific name bestowed by him would imply? These are some of the questions which require elucidation in any attempt to unravel the history of the bird before us. It was probably Temminck who identified Hodgson's specimen with *indicus* of Latham, and ornithologists can scarcely be blamed for having accepted until now without hesitation the opinion of so able a predecessor.†

I myself certainly accepted this identification until the acquisition of a second specimen of the bird, under circumstances presently to be noticed, afforded me an opportunity of a further examination of the questions at issue.

Latham's description of his *Charadrius indicus*, in his 'Index Ornithologicus,' 1790 (vol. ii. p. 750), is very brief:—

"*Charadrius fuscus*, subtus albus, pectore fasciis duabus fuscis, rectricibus basi albis. Habitat in India. Magnitudo *Alaudæ*. 6 poll. longus."

\* A second edition of this Catalogue was printed in 1863, but contains no reference to the species in question.

† In 'The Ibis' for 1867 (p. 165) Blyth wrote—"Both Mr. G. R. Gray and I have in vain sought to identify *Charadrius indicus* of Latham (nec Rüppell)."

This description, as well as that in the Supplement to his 'General Synopsis' (p. 254), and 'General History of Birds,' vol. ix. p. 343 (1824), is based on that of Brisson, given in the second volume (p. 234) of his 'Ornithologia' (8vo ed. 1763), which runs as follows:—

*"Pluvialis minima indica.*

"Pluvialis superne fusca, inferne sordida alba; summo pectore duabus tæniis transversis fuscis distincto; primoribus remigibus fuscis, cæteris nigricantibus; rectricibus in exortu albis, versus extremitatem fuscis.

*"Le petit pluvier des Indes.*

"Cum Alauda crassitie fere convenit. Ipsius longitudo 6 pollices æquat. Rostrum 9 lineas longum est; cauda  $2\frac{1}{2}$  pollices; pars crurum plumis denudata 11 lineas; digitorum medius 9 lineas, extimus 7 lineas, intimus omnium brevissimus. Extremitates alarum  $5\frac{1}{2}$  pollicum intervallo distant; alæ complicatæ ad extremam caudam extenduntur. Rostrum pedesque nigricant. Habitat in India Orientali."

This description of a small two-banded Plover, although applicable to no species known to inhabit India at the present time, applies in part to the specimen labelled *indicus* in the Leiden Museum. But it is evident that that is not the species to which the description was intended to refer, for the bill and feet are described by Brisson as dark, and the tail-feathers white at the base, dusky towards the extremity. Now, if Brisson had had before him the specimen now at Leiden, the distinctly barred tail would not have escaped his attention. On the colour of the bill and feet too much stress, of course, cannot be laid, for we know that a considerable alteration of colour often takes place in the process of drying, and in the course of years. Yet it is noticeable that the legs of the Leiden specimen are still light-coloured, notwithstanding so many years have elapsed since it was procured, while Brisson expressly states that his bird had dark legs.

Now, Von Heuglin, who met with *Æ. tricolor* in pairs on rivulets along the Abyssinian coast, and procured specimens, has described the legs and feet as "greenish grey" ('Ibis,' 1859, p. 345), a colour which would become much darker in drying.



Bearing this in mind, and considering that Brisson's description of the tail-feathers, though not so exact as it might be, will apply generally to *Æ. tricollaris*, Vieillot, it seems most probable that this was the species he had before him. It may well have come from the Red Sea shore (as did the type of Rüppell's *indica*), and have been supposed (like many other things which came from the East formerly) to have come from India. It would seem, therefore, that Rüppell in designating a specimen of *tricollaris* from North-East Africa *Hiaticula indica* (Syst. Uebers. Vög. N. O. Afr. p. 118, 1843), correctly applied the specific name which Latham had adopted from Brisson.\*

Prof. Blasius, then, was right in the view which he expressed when he wrote ('Ibis,' 1861, p. 295):—" *Ægialitis indicus*, Bris. = *tricollaris* (Vieillot), introduced with a score of other species into the European list by Bonaparte and Brehm merely on supposition, on the ground of the possibility of its occurrence."

Lesson identified *indicus*, Latham, with *tricollaris*, Vieillot, but gave priority to the name *bitorquatus*, which he claimed to have himself bestowed upon the species (Man. d'Orn. ii. p. 320).

There can be no doubt that *Charadrius bitorquatus*, Lichtenstein, is identical with *tricollaris*, Vieillot, the description given by Lichtenstein (Verz. Doubl. Mus. Berl. p. 71), as follows, applying unmistakably to that species:—

"Ch. fuscus, fronte superciliis et corona occipitali albis, gutture albicante, abdomine albo fascia pectorali duplici atra; rectricibus lateralibus albis macula media fusca versus internas sensim majore, intermediis duabus totis fuscis. Rostrum basi flavicans. Long.  $6\frac{1}{2}$ '. Tars. 10". Cap. B. Sp."

Lefebvre, in the 'Voyage en Abyssinie,' published under the auspices of the French Government (1845-1850), includes amongst the birds collected by the naturalists to the Expedition (MM. Petit and Dillon), and drawn from life or from recently-killed specimens by their artist, Vignaud:—

"*Le Pluvier à double collier, Charadrius indicus*, auctorum,

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\* Blyth considered *Hiaticula indica*, Rüpp., identical with *tricollaris*, Vieill., but supposed *indicus*, Latham, to be a different species.—'Ibis,' 1867, p. 170, note. This also is the view taken by Prof. Schlegel (Mus. Pays. Bas. *Cursores*, p. 24).

*C. bitorquatus*, Wagler.\* Nos. 36 et 282.† Petit Pluvier à collier, à bec et paupières rouges. Rapporté d'abord de Gondar par Dillon, en Mai, 1840. Retrouvé ensuite à Adoua en Mai et Juillet, 1841, au bord de l'Assan. Assez commun au bord des rivières et dans les prairies après la saison des pluies; à l'Adoua surtout; rase l'eau et se pose au bord sur les pierres ou il s'agite en relevant et baissant brusquement la tête comme tous les pluviers.

“D'après le dessin de Vignaud fait sur le vivant, les paupières de cet oiseau sont en effet rouge vermillon; la moitié du bec, à partir de la commissure est rouge orange; le surplus noir; enfin les pattes sont d'un carminé légèrement brun, et les ongles noirs” (*op. cit.*, pp. 150, 151).

In the Appendix to this volume (p. 179) an additional note on this species runs as follows:—

“Dans le Journal de Petit cet oiseau avait été d'abord classé par lui sous le no. 173 comme *Chevalier*, et on y trouve cet note qui accompagnait un dessin qu'il avait fait de la tête et du cou de cette espèce, et que nous reproduisons textuellement:—J'ai fait le dessin sur l'individu sec envoyé de Gondar par Dillon; en le retrouvant plus tard en Mai 1841, à Adoua, je ne le reconnus pas d'abord, et le classai sous le nom de Pluvier à collier et à paupières rouges, sous les numero 282 (voir à ce numero le dessin refait par Vignaud sur l'individu frais). Ce dessin, de grandeur naturelle, est de la plus parfaite exactitude, et ne ressemble en effet en rien au premier qu'en avait tracé Petit sous le numero 173. La comparaison seule de ces deux dessins fait voir l'importance et la valeur de ceux faits sur le vivant.”

The citations from the above-mentioned authorities (and others might be added‡) serve to show that many ornithologists have concurred in referring the description given in 1790 by Latham (*ex* Brisson) of *Charadrius indicus* to *Charadrius tricoloris*, Vieillot, described (Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat. xxvii. p. 147) in 1818. The correctness of this identification being admitted, it

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\* Wagler ('Systema Avium,' 1827. *Charadrius*, no. 30) adopted the name bestowed by Lichtenstein, *bitorquatus*, adding as a synonym, *tricoloris*, Vieillot.

† The numbers on the tickets of the specimens collected.

‡ In Layard's 'Birds of South Africa,' p. 296, *indicus*, Lath., is given as a synonym of *tricoloris*, Vieill.

would follow that, according to the law of priority, Latham's name for the species should have precedence were it not for the erroneous habitat which would be assigned to it in perpetuity by his specific name.\*

This leads us to consider the geographical range of *tricoloris* before proceeding to enquire into the history of the species in the Leiden Museum, which appears to have been erroneously identified with Latham's *Charadrius indicus*.

*Tricoloris* would seem to be generally distributed over a large portion of the African continent. Von Heuglin, Finsch, and Hartlaub include it amongst the birds of North-East Africa, although according to Capt. Shelley it has not been observed in Egypt. Rüppell found it common along the Red Sea shore; and Lefebvre, Jesse, and Blanford all give it a place amongst the birds of Abyssinia. Sir John Kirk has reported it from Zanzibar, where it was found in Elephant Marsh, on the Shiré River ('Ibis,' 1864, p. 332). Prof. Peters has received specimens from Mozambique; and Messrs. Pollen and Van Dam, and Dr. Hartlaub all testify to its presence in Madagascar.† Further to the south, Mr. Ayres procured specimens on the muddy banks of creeks amongst the mangroves in Natal ('Ibis,' 1865, p. 271), and Mr. Layard has described it as common throughout the Cape Colony, "frequenting equally the sea-shore, the natural vley, artificial dam, or river." He found it abundant in the water-holes of the Karoo rivers, as well as on the coast, and identified it with the "sea-cow bird" of 'Chapman's Travels in South Africa' (Append., p. 371), the constant attendant of the Hippopotamus.‡ In Damara Land, and Great Namaqua Land, Andersson found it similarly dispersed, both inland and along the shore, and generally in small flocks; and turning to the 'Ornithologie d'Angola' (1881, ii. p. 433), by Prof. Barboza du Bocage, we find it stated that this bird occurs on the coasts of Benguela, Angola, and

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\* As to the appropriateness of Vieillot's name for the species, it may be observed that it is less appropriate than *bitorquatus*, bestowed by Lichtenstein in 1823; for the bird is really a "two-banded," and not a "three-banded" Plover, Vieillot's third band being merely the narrow white streak between the two dark bars which cross the breast.

† The Rev. W. Deans Cowan also has more recently procured it in Madagascar.

‡ See Gurney in Andersson's 'Birds of Damara-land,' p. 275, note.

Loango. It thus appears to have a considerable range, but we are not sure whether it has been found north of the Equator on the west coast. There is no evidence of its occurrence in India, as suggested by Brisson and Latham, nor does it appear to have been met with further eastward than the Red Sea. At the same time it might well be expected to occur in the Gulf of Aden, and along the southern coast of Arabia.

We have now to consider the position, scientifically, of the bird which is preserved at Leiden under the name *indicus*, Latham. If, as has been shown, it is not *indicus*, which is identical with *tricollaris*, what is it? and whence comes it if not from India? It cannot be said to be undescribed, for it has been described by Prof. Schlegel (Mus. Pays Bas., *Cursores*, p. 25), by Blyth ('Ibis,' 1870, p. 175), and by Capt. Shelley ('Ibis,' 1872, p. 293; and 1875, p. 382); but while the two first-named authors distinguished it from *tricollaris*, they identified it with *indicus*, Latham, which they imagined to be a different species; and Capt. Shelley, who at first mistook it for *tricollaris*, its nearest ally, subsequently applied the name *indicus*, in the belief that it was the bird described by Latham under that name.\*

It is to Capt. Shelley, indeed, that ornithologists are indebted for having rediscovered the species, so to say, and ascertained its true *patria*, which we now know to be West Africa. In Feb., 1872, while on a visit to the Gold Coast in company with an equally enthusiastic sportsman and naturalist, Mr. T. E. Buckley, the latter shot a solitary specimen of this bird, the only one seen, on some rushy ground at Cape Coast Castle. Until that date Hodgson's specimen in the Leiden Museum was believed to be unique.

Capt. Shelley's description of the soft parts ('Ibis,' 1875, p. 382), as being taken from a freshly-killed specimen, is important. He describes it as—"Rather larger than *tricollaris*, Vieil.; has the tarsus very considerably longer, has no white forehead, and has on the outer tail-feathers an additional dark bar. [He should have said *three* additional bars.] The eyelids

\* It was probably by a slip of the pen that Capt. Shelley, in quoting the authority for the name *indicus*, wrote "Lesson" instead of "Latham" ('Ibis,' 1875, p. 382); for Lesson did no more than adopt as a synonym in 1828 (Man. d'Orn. p. 320) the specific designation which had been bestowed by Latham years previously, namely, in 1790.



and legs were, when fresh, of a clear pink, and I believe the base of the bill was also of that colour; but unfortunately no note was made to that effect at the time. The irides were dark brown."

It is not unlikely that the specimens from Senegambia, the Gold Coast, and the Gaboon, referred to by Von Heuglin (Orn. N. O. Afrikas, ii. 1029), and the specimen in the Hamburg Museum, procured at Elmina by Weiss, and on the Gaboon, as recorded by Dr. Hartlaub (Orn. W. Afr. p. 217), may prove to be examples of the same species. Quite recently it was procured on the Niger by the late Mr. W. A. Forbes, whose untimely death in January, 1883 (at Shonga, a station some 400 miles up the Niger below Rabba), has been deplored by all zoologists. I am informed by Capt. Shelley, who is engaged in working out the collection of birds sent home by Forbes, that it contains a single specimen of the hitherto so-called *Charadrius* (or *Ægialitis*) *indicus*.

Having shown that this name, however, is inapplicable to the species (being referable to *tricollaris*, Vieillot), and having shown also that the bird does not come from India, as supposed, but from the West Coast of Africa, it is desirable that it should be now renamed, in order to obviate any further misconception concerning it; and since it would appear to be the West African representative of the more widely distributed *tricollaris*, inhabiting the country watered by the Niger and its tributaries, I propose to name it *Ægialitis nigris*.\*

The distinguishing characters of the species have already been noted (p. 410), and need not be here repeated. It only remains to endeavour to unravel some of the confusion which exists in regard to the synonymy, giving only the more important references, thus:—

*ÆGIALITIS TRICOLLARIS* (Vieillot).

*Charadrius tricollaris*, Vieillot, N. D. d'Hist. nat. xxvii. p. 147 (1818).

„ *indicus*, Latham (*ex* Brisson), Ind. Orn. ii. p. 750 (1790).

„ *bitorquatus*, Lichtenstein, Verz. Doubl. Zool. Mus. Berl. p. 71 (1823); Wagler, Syst. Av. Charad. no. 30 (1827); Lesson, Man. d'Orn. ii. p. 320 (1828).

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\* The practice of naming species after individuals is not to be commended, and now-a-days has become so common that it has almost ceased to convey a compliment. Were it otherwise, no one would be more deserving of such a compliment than Capt. Shelley, who may be said to have rediscovered the present species, and who has done so much to advance our knowledge of African Ornithology.

*Hiaticula indica*, Rüppell, Syst. Uebers. Vög. N. O. Afr. p. 118 (1843).

„ *tricollaris*, Gray, Gen. B. iii. p. 534 (1844-49).

*Charadrius indicus*, Lefebvre, Voy. en. Abyssin. Ois. p. 150 (1845-50).

*Ægialitis indicus*, Heuglin, Syst. Uebers. p. 56 (1856).

„ *cinereicollis*, Heuglin, l. c.

„ *tricollaris*, Hartlaub, Orn. W. Afr. p. 216 (1857); Orn. Madagasc. p. 72 (1861).

„ *tricollaris*, Blasius, Ibis, 1861, p. 295.

*Charadrius tricollaris*, Schlegel, Mus. Pays. Bas. Cursores, p. 24 (1865); Layard, Birds S. Afr. p. 296 (1867); Finsch. & Hartlaub, Vög. Ost. Afr. p. 655 (1870).

*Ægialitis tricollaris*, Blanford, Zool. Abyss. p. 429 (1870); Andersson, Birds Damara-land, p. 274 (1872); Harting, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1874, p. 457, pl. lx. (egg figured); Bécage, Orn. d'Angola, ii. p. 433 (1881); Holub & Von Pelzeln, Beiträge zur Orn. Süd. Afr. p. 240 (1882).

#### ÆGIALITIS NIGRIS, Harting.

*Charadrius indicus*, Schlegel, Mus. Pays Bas., Cursores, p. 25 (1865), *nec* Latham; Blyth, Ibis, 1870, p. 175, *nec* Latham.

*Ægialitis tricollaris*, Shelley, Ibis, 1872, p. 293, *nec* Vieillot.

„ *indica*, Shelley, Ibis, 1875, p. 382, *nec* Latham.

Some uncertainty still exists with regard to *Æ. cinereicollis*, Heuglin. He himself, in 1873, referred it to *tricollaris* (Orn. Nordost. Afr. ii. p. 1027), but in 'The Ibis' for 1860 (p. 430) he wrote:—"This species is very closely allied to *Æ. tricollaris*, but smaller and different, *especially in the tail-markings*." This seems to indicate that he had the two species before him from North-East Africa, of which the smaller *cinereicollis*, "found singly at mountain pools and streams in Abyssinia," would be *tricollaris*, Vieillot, as were all the specimens brought home from Abyssinia by Messrs. Blanford and Jesse which I have examined.

This leaves it at present uncertain how far *Ægialitis nigris* penetrates towards the east of the great African continent. It would be of interest to examine specimens from the Gaboon, where the two species would be expected to meet, but where at present, according to Dr. Hartlaub, only *tricollaris* has been obtained.

## ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES FROM DEVON AND CORNWALL.

BY JOHN GATCOMBE.

By March 14th numbers of adult Sea-mews, *Larus canus*, mostly in pairs, had assembled in our harbours *en route* for their breeding quarters. This Gull, I am glad to say, appears to have become more plentiful within the last few years; but "Common Gull" is still I fear rather a misnomer, at least on this part of the coast. I examined a nice male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, killed in the neighbourhood of Plymouth; the stomach contained small white maggots or grubs with very black heads. On March 19th I observed the last Black Redstart of the season at the Devil's Point, Stonehouse. Notwithstanding excessively cold easterly winds, Mr. Brodrick, of Chudleigh, informed me that he saw Wheatears near Haldon on March 22nd, but I did not observe them at Plymouth until the 30th of the month. On one occasion, some years ago, I met with a Wheatear on Dartmoor as early as March 6th.

In April Lesser Black-backed Gulls were numerous in pairs, and in full breeding-plumage. On the 11th of that month the nest of a pair of Ravens which breed annually at Bovisand, near Plymouth, was visited, and found to contain two young birds almost ready to fly; and a friend informed me that some Cornish Choughs were nesting near Bude, which I am glad to say were left unmolested. On April 19th a female Hoopoe was obtained at Saltash, near Plymouth; and I heard of another which had flown on board a ship at sea, but left for the shore on nearing Portsmouth; the stomach of the Saltash specimen contained the skins of caterpillars or grubs of beetles; the eggs in the ovary were much advanced.

On May 1st I observed many birds at a distance on the West mud-banks of the Tamar, which I felt sure were Whimbrels, and the day after I heard their notes. By the 4th a small party of Common Sandpipers, *Tringa hypoleucus*, were seen on the rocks at Stonehouse; wind N.E. and very cold. On the same day an adult male Ring Ouzel was killed in the neighbourhood. Swifts were seen on the 8th, and as late as the 12th (strange to say) a couple of Brent Geese were sent in the flesh to a local birdstuffer. Whimbrels by that date were plentiful, and I examined one

which was killed by flying against a telegraph-wire; several were brought to a Stonehouse birdstuffer on the 19th, together with a male Nightjar, as well as a pretty pied variety of the Rook, and a pure white Robin, both young.

On June 15th, in company with two friends, Messrs. Brooking Rowe and W. S. M. D'Urban, I visited the breeding-place of the Herring Gulls at Wembury, but found that the nests must have been sadly robbed; for we could only perceive a few young birds and a single egg, where on former occasions I have seen numbers of both. I have since been told that some persons had previously visited the place almost daily for a fortnight, endeavouring to pull up the young ones with a stout cord and hook, or something of the kind, and appear to have been tolerably successful, as a friend of mine who happened to be fishing on the Yealm, just off the cliffs, saw them haul up two or three young birds not nearly able to fly. He then thought it time to put a stop to their fun by rowing in and giving them a bit of his mind on the subject, upon which they actually pretended to have been perfectly ignorant of the Sea Birds Act, and only wanted a few young gulls for their gardens. This is not all, for I understand that the farmers' boys of the neighbourhood frequently lower themselves by ropes to take both eggs and young. It is a great pity that such wanton destruction of bird-life should not be stopped, as the number of breeding gulls appears to be getting less every year, and the farmers themselves take care to shoot or trap every Peregrine that ventures near the cliffs in which they used annually to nest. The only other breeding-place for the Herring Gulls near Plymouth is at Rhame, on the Cornish coast. I was told by a man who is in the habit of shooting gulls and other sea birds, and on whom I think I can depend, a singular incident concerning this colony of breeding gulls. Last summer, as he was fishing off the Rhame Head, he was astonished to see these gulls actually diving in the water just off their breeding-place, and after remaining under for several seconds, would immediately fly with what they had caught to their nests and young on the cliffs; and so astonished was he at seeing gulls dive, that (as he expressed it) he "could scarcely believe his eyes," and pulled his boat in to satisfy himself of the fact; they were swimming about and diving just like sea ducks, but did not remain under water half so long. He thought they must have been diving after some small fry



swimming not far from the surface. I think what he said must be true, but I must say that I myself have never seen gulls dive.

On the day I visited Wembury a specimen of the Pomatorhine Skua was brought to the Stonehouse birdstuffer, which had been killed near the Manacles off the coast of Cornwall. It was a young bird of last year, and in very interesting plumage. The person who shot it said that he saw it attack and rob several gulls, which it ultimately frightened away. In order to bring the skua within shot he flung out several fish, but it would not deign to touch them. After flying round for a long time, however, he managed to get a chance, and brought it down. I do not remember having seen a specimen of this skua on our coast at this time of the year before, but there had been some very severe gales from the north for several days previously. The same person told me that on one occasion he saw a Shearwater (?) actually kill a small Gull on the water.

On June 22nd I examined a male Storm Petrel which had been knocked down and killed by a Herring Gull when flying about in the Great Western Docks at Plymouth. The Gull knocked it down twice, and when picked up by a man in a boat it was found that the top of its skull was quite bare from the force of the blows. The stomach was empty; the testes much enlarged. On the 24th the entrance of the harbour was full of gulls, and I observed upwards of two hundred resting on the rocks of Drakes Island and as many more settled on the water, feeding on shoals of small fry, with almost the same number flying round and constantly dipping after their prey. They were for the most part non-breeding Herring Gulls, with a few of Lesser Black-backed Gulls in immature plumage.

On July 18th I observed a number of Black-headed Gulls on the St. Germans River, which had already returned from their breeding-haunts; and by the 27th of the month Common Sandpipers were heard passing overhead at night. During the day I witnessed a large flight of Sand Martins flying north-west; wind north, and weather very fine.

On August 2nd a young Greenshank was brought to the Stonehouse birdstuffer which had been shot in the neighbourhood. Its knees were very thick, similar to those of the Norfolk Plover, and which I have also remarked to be the case with the young of the Green Sandpiper. Its stomach was quite empty. I had

almost forgotten to mention that, when at Wembury, we observed on the rocks a little way from the shore a Cormorant which appeared to have a narrow but clearly-defined pure white ring round its neck, and which contrasted strongly with the general dark plumage. I think we could hardly be mistaken, for we all looked at it through a powerful pocket-glass. Swifts were still to be seen hawking high in the air on August 18th, and the same day a young Corn Crake was brought in which had been killed by flying against the Eddystone Lighthouse. It was in good condition, though its stomach contained nothing but small particles of quartz and gravel. This seems to be rather an early date for the departure for a young bird.

On August 29th I visited Brent, a few miles from Plymouth, and on the River Avon observed several Dippers, both young and old, also many Grey Wagtails, some of which latter had only just begun to lose the black throat-patch of the breeding season. When passing Plympton in the train I saw some Swifts wheeling round at a great height; the weather very fine and warm.

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### NOTES AND QUERIES.

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**The Age of an Eagle.**—Eagles are proverbially said to be long-lived, although it does not often happen that such statements are based on actual observation. The following paragraph relating to the age of an Imperial Eagle appeared in the 'Times' of Sept. 8th:—"The Berlin 'Post' reports that some days ago at Fürstenwald, in the province of Brandenburg, a field labourer heard a dog howling in a most dismal manner. Running in the direction whence the sounds came he saw a large bird perched on the back of the watch-dog of a neighbouring farmer, and the two were struggling, half in the air, half on the ground. At last they passed into a copse. He ran and called the bailiff of the place where he was working. Returning to the spot they saw the bird hopping a few paces, moving with difficulty. He tried to fly, but was evidently disabled. A shot killed him. They found the dog dead; all the flesh had been literally torn off his bones by his enemy. The bird was an Eagle, of the species known as *Aquila imperialis*, and measured seven feet between the tips of his wings. The dark, almost black, plumage, with the snow-white shoulders, gave a hint as to his age. On his left foot, just above the claws, was a ring made of a strong gold plate, on which were cut the letters, still quite visible, 'H. Ks. o. k.,' underneath which was the word 'Eperjes,' and on the other side the date—

'10. 9. 1827.' Eperjes is a town in Upper Hungary, not very far from the Northern Carpathians. Evidently that Eagle had a history."

**Zoology of the Channel Islands.**—We have received, from Messrs. Sinel & Co., of David Place, St. Heliers, Jersey, selected lists of zoological specimens collected by them in the Channel Islands. Situated in one of the most favourable spots of the British Islands for collecting marine forms, they appear to be in a position to supply naturalists and students with useful collections, and to enable them to fill up blanks in series where rare or local forms are desiderata. Amongst Crustacea they mention such rarities as *Callianassa subterranea*, and amongst Mollusca, *Macra glauca*. We understand that Mr. Sinel is well acquainted with the birds which frequent the Channel Islands, and can supply well-made skins. His microscopic slides of Marine Zoology may be recommended, for the medium used being of the same density as sea-water and of an excellent preservative nature, the living appearance of the objects is fully retained. A good working naturalist in the Channel Islands has long been wanted, and we hope that Messrs. Sinel & Co. will meet with the support which their energy deserves.

## BIRDS.

**Grey Crow nesting in Warwickshire.**—I send the following as a supplement to Mr. Whitaker's note on this subject:—Early in May I heard that a pair of Grey Crows had been seen in Sutton Park several times. I mentioned the fact to Mr. R. F. Felton, an indefatigable egg-collector, asking him to try and find the nest. On May 21st he was fortunate enough to do so, thanks to the farmer upon whose land it was built, and who informed him that he had shot what he called a "Gaw Crow" with a blue back, and had given it to the ferrets. The nest was placed in the top of a thick high Scotch fir in a small coppice adjoining the park; it was of high dimensions, the foundation being composed of sticks of considerable size and twigs of the fir, the inner portion of fine roots and bark, lined with grass, wool, and hair. Mr. Felton brought me the eggs, three in number, which are of a pale bluish ground colour, streaked with greenish brown, and a little smaller than the normal eggs of *Corvus corone*. I asked him to fetch me the nest, which he intended doing on the 26th, but upon climbing up to it he found that a Kestrel had laid one egg in it. He therefore left it in hope of obtaining the clutch; upon going again on June 2nd found the Kestrel had deserted, so brought me the inner part of nest. I have now the nest and eggs of both Grey Crow and Kestrel in my possession.—ROBERT W. CHASE (Edgbaston, Birmingham).

**Wren's Eggs in a Swallow's Nest.**—In the last number of 'The Zoologist' (p. 380) is a note by Capt. E. F. Becher respecting the occupation of a Swallow's nest by a Wren. To show that this is not a unique

case I think it worth while to record a similar instance observed by myself. On the 29th May, 1879, I obtained a clutch of five Wren's eggs from a Swallow's nest built under the rafters in the front of a cow-shed at Tunstall, near Sittingbourne, Kent. The nest was evidently not in any way altered by the Wrens, but contained only the few feathers and short hay which I have usually observed in the nest of the Swallow; the original proprietors of the nest were also flying about, and one of them entered it for a moment whilst I was watching. I have little doubt that the Wren had either been robbed of or frightened away from its own habitation when just ready to lay, and therefore adopted the first nest suitable to its requirements.—A. G. BUTLER (British Museum).

**Wigeon in Notts in August.**—When walking round the lake here on August 5th with Messrs. Aplin and Bidwell, a male Wigeon, in summer plumage, flew out of the rushes. From the way in which it rose and flew away, it could not have stayed here from being wounded. This is the first time I have ever seen a Wigeon in Nottinghamshire during the summer. In my note on the Grey Crow nesting near Birmingham, the word "north" ought to have been "south," but any naturalist would at once see it was a printer's mistake.—J. WHITAKER (Rainworth Lodge, Notts).

**Leach's Petrel picked up in Birmingham.**—Last week, at one of our local bird-stuffers, I saw a male specimen of Leach's Petrel, which had been picked up dead in Guildford Street, in this town. The common Storm Petrel has several times been obtained in the borough, but this is the first occurrence, to my knowledge, of the rarer species.—ROBERT W. CHASE (Birmingham).

**Variety of the Coal Titmouse.**—On the 24th of August last my brother, the Rev. W. Becher, shot, in an orchard at Southwell, Notts, a Coal Titmouse (*Parus ater*), a male of the year, of which the following is a description:—Head, nape, and breast white, but crest-feathers strongly tipped with black, giving a mottled appearance to the crest; feathers on the throat very slightly tipped with black; greenish tinge round and behind the eyes and on the sides of the neck; the feathers, for some way down the back, tipped with the normal colour, olive-grey, the remainder being white, the amount of white rapidly diminishing towards the tail; the feathers on the other parts were of the usual colour. The bill was parti-coloured, the culmen and under side of lower mandible being black, the remainder white.—E. F. BECHER.

**White and Pied Varieties of Birds.**—Apropos of the White Curlew, recorded at p. 377, and your editorial comments, it may be of interest to remark that on Sept. 11th I examined, at the house of Mr. Watson, the vergers of Carlisle Cathedral, a pied Woodcock, obtained in June, 1882, in Durham. It is not, however, extensively pied, the leucotism only



extending to some of the flight-feathers of the wings. I may add that a pure white Starling was observed near Cumwhinton, Carlisle, in July, 1883, by my friend, the Rev. J. Howard, and another; that on August 10th I watched for many minutes, near Brough Marsh, a House Martin, of which the primaries and secondaries of the right wing, and the primaries of the left wing, were snow-white; a white and dove-coloured House Swallow was shot at Wigton in August; there is now a beautifully pied House Sparrow in the neighbourhood of Wigton; there are three pied House Sparrows about Carlisle, one of which has been pied since I first observed it in January, 1883; a pied cock Chaffinch haunted the garden of a friend here in the centre of the town throughout the winter of 1882-3; there are one or two pied Jackdaws about Eden Bridge (there were two in spring), and two Rooks in our parish have some white wing-quills. One of our stuffers has a white Song Thrush, shot close to Carlisle in 1880. As I have never seen a pied Shore Lark in any collection, I may add that I had a hen-bird of this species, taken at Dover in 1880, which became pied in the moult of 1881, while in confinement. As pure white varieties of the Goldfinch are very rare, I should like to record that a hen-bird of this species, in the possession of a Mr. Hamilton, of Carlisle, has just acquired (Sept. 13th), in confinement, a snowy garb of remarkable purity. Reared in 1880 by hand, this bird, I understand, acquired in its first moult a sufficient sprinkling of white feathers to make it an object of interest to its owner, who this summer paired it with a male Goldfinch, which, however, ate all his mate's eggs. During the last few weeks this hen, being apparently in perfect health, has assumed a perfectly clear white garb, with the exception of about six crimson feathers on the forehead, a very faint and delicate crescent of pale brown on the throat, and a very rich Goldfinch-yellow "bloom" on the wings; this golden colour is, strange to say, repeated on the breast and outer tail-feathers, both of which portions are deeply tinged with clear gold. The beak and feet incline from pink to flesh-colour. The owner declines to part with this bird on any terms, or I should have tried to perpetuate the variety; but I have put in a claim for its body, if any mishap should occur. From the perfect condition of the bird, it may live many years. Its owner considers that an over-indulgence in lettuce leaves may have assisted in procuring this totally unexpected change of plumage.—H. A. MACPHERSON (Carlisle).

**Notes on the Ornithology of Northamptonshire.**—The following notes on the Ornithology of our county, from the beginning of the current year, are given to a great extent upon the authority of others, whose names I propose to state. I was absent from home from November 4th, 1882, till August 16th, 1883, and during that period mainly dependent for local bird news upon my friend and near neighbour, Mr. George Hunt, of Wadenhoe House, Oundle, in whose keen powers of observation and strict

accuracy I have complete faith :—Twenty Magpies, *Pica rustica*, were shot in two days, by my informant and his brother, about Barnwell Wold (G. H., *ut supra litt.*, Jan. 4th). I received a Greater Spotted Woodpecker, *Picus major*, female, from G. H., shot by one of my gamekeepers near this place on Jan. 10th. Several hundreds of Herring Gulls, *Larus argentatus*, were seen near Barnwell by G. H. (*litt.*, Jan. 9th). Mr. Hunt has recently informed me that the numbers of this species gradually increased to some thousands, which frequented the flooded meadows in the valley of the Nen, between this place and Thrapston, for several weeks during the daytime, and regularly passed northwards in straggling flocks each afternoon; the great attraction to the Gulls was no doubt the vast quantity of drowned earthworms in the meadows, several of these Gulls, shot at this period hereabouts, having their maws crammed with the animals above named. In 'The Field' of Jan. 13th last there appeared a notice, dated Jan. 16th, 1883, of the occurrence of a Woodchat, *Lanius rufus*, near Stamford, communicated to that paper by Mr. A. G. Elliott, of that town, who, in answer to my inquiries, wrote as follows :—"The Woodchat noted in 'The Field' was picked up dead on the 9th inst; it is a female, and in fair condition; the plumage is slightly soiled. It appears to have been on the fallow-land some time, and had been dead at least two days before I received it; one side of the head was slightly decomposed; it was in very poor condition, and showed all the appearance of a bird that is picked up in a long frost. The exact locality, I believe, would be in Wothorpe parish, but it is in the occupation of a Stamford farmer, and within one hundred yards of Burghley Top, or deer-park, so that in reality the bird was found in Northamptonshire. The *Lanius rufus* I hope to place in my collection of British small birds. I have had several applications to purchase, also several gentlemen to see the bird: it will be there for show." Mr. Elliott also mentioned, in the same communication, the occurrence of a Kentish Plover, *Egialitis cantiana*, near Wansford, on 25th November, 1882. If his determination of this species is correct, this is the first occurrence of the bird in this neighbourhood which has come to my knowledge. I may mention that I am personally acquainted with Mr. Elliott, and have no doubt whatever as to his perfect good faith and considerable acquaintance with British birds. On April 19th I received a letter from Mr. G. Hunt, in which he wrote of having seen six Bernacle Geese, *Bernicla leucopsis*, fly past him at a short distance as he was fishing in the Nen near the village of Aldwinchle. I never heard of the occurrence of this species hereabouts in an apparently wild state before; the probability, at this distance from the sea, is of course in favour of these Geese being semi-domesticated birds, but most persons who keep "fowl" in that condition are careful to have them pinioned, and on the whole I am disposed to give these birds the benefit of the doubt, and to consider them as an

interesting addition to the avifauna of our county. I heard, from one of my gamekeepers, that on July 17th he had taken three young of the Greater Spotted Woodpecker, *Picus major*, from a hole in an oak tree in one of my woods, and attempted to rear them, without success. This species cannot be considered as rare in this neighbourhood, although far less abundant than the Lesser Spotted and Green Woodpeckers, but the nest has been seldom met with to my knowledge hereabouts. On August 13th two young Hobbies, *Falco subbuteo*, were taken from an old nest of a Carrion Crow in a tall oak tree in a wood of great extent some miles distant from this house, and brought thither. On my return home, on August 16th, I found these birds in good health, with much down still amongst their feathers. I am glad to say that the parent birds were spared; the gamekeeper in charge of the wood above mentioned told my man, who went over to fetch these little Falcons, that he believed a pair or two of this species had bred in the same quarter of the wood for many years past, but curiously enough he had no distinguishing name for them. A rotten egg was in the nest with these two young birds. I may also mention that a pair of Hobbies have been haunting one of my woods near this house throughout the months of July and August; we have not been able to discover their nest, and I suspect that their eggs or young must have been destroyed by other than human agency. In Barnwell Wold a pair of Hobbies have certainly reared a brood this season; Mr. G. Hunt saw three in one tree on August 31st close to the Wold, and I and many others have seen two or three, and once four, of these birds on several occasions haunting some rough pasture land in my possession adjoining the Wold. These Hobbies are, comparatively speaking, by no means shy; they glide swiftly at no great height from the ground, crying incessantly. I have not seen these last-mentioned individuals in pursuit of any "quarry," but in a locality nearer home, whilst I was waiting to shoot Wood Pigeons on Sept. 6th, I noticed a commotion amongst a large flock of Rooks at a great distance. I saw a dark speck shoot from the clouds through them nearly to the ground, and a minute or two afterwards a fine old Hobby passed within twenty yards of me with a Yellowhammer in her claws. I am doing my utmost to preserve this beautiful species from destruction in this neighbourhood; but I always like to have a Hobby or two alive, and am particularly anxious to obtain an adult bird early enough in the season to train her for "daring" Sky Larks, as described by old British authors on Falconry. The Hobby seldom lingers with us beyond the end of September, and my personal experience is that the young are rarely fit to train till towards the end of August, so that the time for teaching them their business is very short, whereas an old bird knows it, and would only require to be "reclaimed," a very short operation to any person who understands hawks, with this more docile of the British *Falconidæ*. Mr. W. Tomalin, of Northampton, has recorded (p. 300), and

was good enough to send me private notice of, the occurrence of a Pied Flycatcher, *Muscicapa atricapilla*, male, at Dallington, near Northampton, on May 1st. I have, as I firmly believe, once seen a specimen of this bird here many years ago, but the above is, as far as I know, the only authentic record of a capture of the species within the political boundaries of our county. Mr. Hunt shot a fine specimen of *Larus ridibundus*, with full brown mask and only one leg, near Oundle on May 5th. I only record this fact because the bird does not nest in our county, and its appearance herein in nuptial plumage is very uncommon. Some of this species have bred and reared young in my aviary during these two last summers of 1882 and 1883. Mr. Hunt, writing to me on June 21st, mentioned the unusual abundance in our neighbourhood of Red-backed Shrikes, *Lanius collurio*, and Whinchats, *Pratincola rubetra*. My friend Mr. Frederick Rooper wrote, June 28th, that a "Solan Goose," *Sula bassana*, was brought to him "last month," killed at Ramsey, Hunts, and adds, "I have never heard of one in these parts before: he was very much starved." I include this occurrence, although not within the political boundaries of our county, as I consider that the whole of the County of Huntingdon belongs to the same zoological region as our own. Mr. Hunt reported to me the first appearance of Common Snipe, *Scolopax gallinago*, in our Nen valley this season on August 9th, on which day he shot the only two seen by him near Aldwinckle. I found Green Sandpipers, *Totanus ochropus*, in about their average numbers in this district during the latter half of the month of August. I may mention that I have met with this species in Northamptonshire in every month of the year except June. We have more Sparrowhawks, *Accipiter nisus*, than I ever remember hereabouts. My gamekeepers destroyed several nests, with their contents, during June and July. Ten have come to a violent death by their own agency since August 16th on my property, but nevertheless we see one or more on wing almost every day; one of the defunct above mentioned committed suicide by dashing himself against the wire netting of an aviary. One of our gamekeepers reported eleven Curlews, *Numenius arquatus*, passing up our Nen valley in first week of August. An Osprey, *Pandion haliaëtus*, was seen by Mr. Hunt near Wadenhoe on the evening of August 24th, and came within easy shot of me the next morning as I was fishing on our river between this house and Oundle; I snatched up my gun as I saw the bird coming, pursued by a Carrion Crow and many Hirundines, and at first thought that it was a Harrier, *Circus*, but I soon saw my mistake, sat still in the boat, and the Osprey came on till within some fifty yards of me before seeing us; he then soared away high in air over the park, pursued by a cloud of Rooks and small birds, apparently Swallows and House Martins. We had a good view of him the next day (August 26th), near Aldwinckle, and saw him make two ineffectual plunges into a broad reach of the river; this bird was last seen



in this neighbourhood on August 29th, and, as far as I know, our county is as yet innocent of his blood. We notice a very unusual abundance this summer of the Common Turtle Dove, *Turtur communis*, and of the Hawfinch, *Coccothraustes vulgaris*, in this neighbourhood; both these species are comparatively recently established in this part of our county as breeders. Some thirty years ago the Turtle Dove was virtually unknown hereabouts; and, till the spring of 1870, we always looked upon the Hawfinch as an occasional, and by no means abundant, winter visitor; the Red-backed Shrike, *Lanius collurio*, also, though not very common, is now becoming well known in this district, but certainly was not to be met with within the radius of my boyish birds'-nesting rambles from 1840 to 1851, to say nothing of those of my occasional summers at home between the last-mentioned year and 1871. Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus*, were heard passing over high in air before daylight on August 29th. A young Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, seen September 13th.—LILFORD (Lilford Hall, Oundle, September 15th, 1883).

**Late Nesting of the Nightjar.**—With reference to the note of Mr. W. Hewett (p. 380), it is somewhat singular that on the same date (August 19th), my friend Mr. Butterfield, of Wilsden, informed me that on August 16th he had found a nest of the Nightjar with one egg in it at Blackhills, Wilsden. On the same evening (August 19th) we visited the nest, and found the egg had evidently been hatched during the same day, and the young bird was lying about a yard away from the egg, quite cold and apparently dead. I placed it in a small tin box and took it home, and about an hour afterwards was surprised to find it very lively. I fed it with small moths, and it thrived very well for three days, but after that time it refused to take food, and died two days afterwards.—H. T. SOPPITT (Saltaire, Yorkshire).

**Late Nesting of the Nightjar.**—Mr. W. Hewett, in his note on the late nesting of the Nightjar (p. 380), asks if any other correspondent has found young ones so late as the date he mentions (August 19th). I have found eggs very nearly as late. Last year a Nightjar laid two in a wooded dell behind my house; she laid one of them on the 26th of July, and one a day or two earlier. They were hatched on the 13th of August. On the 4th of August, 1880, Mr. F. Norgate and I flushed a Nightjar off two eggs at Cawston, only one of which was incubated, and which probably would not have been hatched for some time, my experience with the other nest showing that eighteen days is the period of incubation. This is longer than in small birds (Passeres). A still later instance of nidification is mentioned in 'The Field' of August 21st, 1880, by a correspondent, who records the finding of two eggs in Sussex, on August 17th, in a small wood. It has been doubted whether the Nightjar rears two broods in a season; that

it generally does so in Norfolk I feel sure, the contrary opinion having perhaps arisen from the circumstance of its being so late a migrant. That the eggs at Cawston were a second laying by birds which had had young previously, I think, as I saw four young ones at the same place able to fly on the 19th of the month previous (July). These would have been at least twenty-one days old, most likely older, and two of them were probably the first brood of the pair whose eggs Mr. Norgate and I found on August 4th. Considerable doubt is expressed on the point in Yarrell (Brit. Birds, 4th ed., p. 383), the editor evidently thinking that if second broods occur they are rare. This year Nightjars have been very scarce with us. I have only seen two young ones, and their familiar "jarring" has been quite a rare sound.—J. H. GURNEY, JUN. (Northrepps, Norwich).

**Note of the Long-eared Owl.**—One evening in May, 1879, I was standing at dusk in a dense wood of tall firs at Tower Hill, Co. Limerick, where I had often seen birds of this species. One suddenly made its appearance, and perched in a larch close by; and I then heard it several times utter, at intervals of about a quarter of a minute, a very plaintive single note in a high key, which I syllabled "moo." The bird after a short time quitted the tree and perched in another, when it was shot by a boy who accompanied me. I have never had an opportunity of hearing the Tawny Owl, and do not know whether the sound I heard can rightly be described as a hoot; but certainly, if "hooting" consists of the same note two or three times continuously repeated, the cry I heard cannot be classed as such. With regard to the very strange quacking note of the Long-eared Owl (described by Mr. Ussher, Zool. 1882, p. 265), is it not singular that this sound has not (apparently) been heard by English ornithologists, and that, as far as I am aware, no mention is made of it in any of the text-books on British birds? I cannot say how extraordinary this latter note seemed to me. It is impossible that a better description could have been given of it.—WILLIAM W. FLEMING (Clonegam Rectory, Portlaw, Co. Waterford).

#### FISHES.

**Occurrence of the Tunny in the Exe.**—On the 14th inst. a specimen of the Tunny, *Oreynus thynnus*, was left by the tide in a pool, on the Exe, a mile above Topsham, and above seven miles from the sea. Length from tip of snout to notch of caudal fin, 3 ft. 10½ in.; girth at commencement of first dorsal fin, 26½ in.; width, from root of first dorsal to root of ventral fin, 16 in. The pectoral fin is 9 in. in length, and reaches to the tenth ray of the first dorsal. The first dorsal has 13 rays, the pectorals 31, and the ventrals 15. The pectorals, first dorsal, and ventrals are sunk in deep grooves in the skin. The first ray of the first dorsal is the longest, the eighth the shortest. Length of each lobe of the caudal fin, 9 in.; from tip to tip of caudal, 1 ft. 1¾ in.; length of head, 12¼ in.; diameter of eye,

1½ in.; from snout to eye, 4¼ in.; weight about 1 cwt.; nine finlets between second dorsal and caudal fin, and eight between anal and caudal; corslet not marked; colour dark grey on back, silvery white on sides and belly; gill-covers finely ciliated; the lateral line waved near the tail; between the last ray of first dorsal and the second dorsal a space of 1½ in., but the groove is continuous, and probably another ray is developed in older individuals; vertebral column and processes very rigid, and of great strength and hardness; ribs very long elastic rods of bone; small and very sharp teeth in the jaws, but none on the tongue, vomer, or palatines; tongue black, very large, and solid; flesh extremely muscular, dark and meat-like in appearance; abdominal cavity gorged with dark blood; nothing in stomach; heart shaped like the triangular lead-sinkers sometimes used by sea fishermen, the base perfectly flat. This specimen answers exactly to the description of *Orcynus brachypterus*, Cav. & Val., which Dr. F. Day considers the young of the Common Tunny. Specimens of this fish, of large size, have been taken at Plymouth, Dartmouth, and Dawlish, but this is the first instance of its occurrence in the Exe, and the great distance it had reached from the sea is remarkable. I purchased the specimen for this Museum, but I am sorry to say the effort to preserve it has not been very successful. Whether the fact of the fish having been about forty-eight hours out of water in warm weather had weakened the skin, or whether the skin is naturally of loose structure, I do not know, but it would hardly hold together sufficiently to admit of being stuffed. At first no scales were visible, but the scarf-skin having peeled off exposing them, they became detached and fell off in great numbers; they are largest near the head. I could not find any parasites, with the exception of one *Filaria*-like worm in the abdominal cavity.—W. S. M. D'URBAN (Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter).

**Migrations of the Pilchard.**—I have it on thoroughly trustworthy authority that large shoals of Pilchards are met with every year in the deep sea eight and more leagues south round to west of the Scilly Islands during the Mackerel season (*i. e.*, between February and June), and before the inshore Pilchard season commences. The Mackerel drift-nets pick up many of these fish, and from their catches there is reason to believe that the Pilchards in these shoals are females with spawn ready to be shed, and of so large a size as to be capable of being meshed in the mackerel nets. Fortunately these fish make a close-time for themselves. My informant tells me that, diverging from the usual rule of fish bearing ripe roe, they are so dry and tasteless as to be worthless as food. I have never that I can recollect seen a Pilchard with roe in it, and when the fish arrive off our coasts in July they are very fat indeed.—THOMAS CORNISH (Penzance).

**Large Fishes on the Devonshire Coast.**—In June a large Sunfish was seen off Dartmouth and Exmouth. On September 13th a male Thrasher,

15 ft. long, was captured in a drift-net off Exmouth, and was exhibited in Exeter; and I have heard of several large Sharks, probably Blue Sharks, having been taken on the coast this summer and autumn.—W. S. M. D'URBAN.

#### ARCHÆOLOGY.

**Ferret: origin of the Name.**—When the Romans introduced the Rabbit into Italy, they introduced the custom of hunting it with Ferrets; and when they imported the same animal into Britain they imported the same custom with it (Pliny, lib. x. cap. 21). The great reason for the Roman introduction of the former animal into both was the pleasure which they took in hunting it with the latter. The Britons adopted what the Romans practised, and have transmitted to us, their successors, the Roman-Spanish hunt and the Roman-Spanish name for the animal employed in it; denominating the latter *Viverra*, in Welsh *Guivaer*, and in Irish *Firead* or Ferret. See Whitaker's Hist. Manchester (1771), Book I. chap. 10, p. 344.

**The Dodo.**—In vol. iv. of Shaw's 'General Natural History' there is a coloured figure of the Dodo, a copy of the painting in the British Museum, said to have been taken from life. If so, the artist failed in its proper delineation, as will be readily seen on comparing the head with the skull of a Dodo, found by Shaw, in the Ashmolean Museum, which had been seen by Willughby and Ray, of which I send an outline sketch; also a figure of the Dodo pictured, seemingly a monstrosity, if we may judge from the bill, faulty in shape and size, the lower mandible being convex; whereas in the bill itself it is slightly concave and angular, or Gull-like, towards the extremity, and the bill more depressed than that of the original, which is well-nigh straight for two-thirds of its length. Remarking on the head discovered in the Ashmolean Museum, Shaw says that "it is undeniable that the general appearance of the beak of an Albatross is not greatly dissimilar to that of the Dodo." But they are readily distinguished, the nostrils of the former being high up on the bill towards the forehead, those of the latter situated low down on the mandible towards the extremity; its Pigeon-shaped legs and feet appear too slight to carry so bulky a body, and very unlike the leg described by Grew in his 'Museum Regalis Societatis.'—H. W. HADFIELD (Ventnor, Isle of Wight).

**Wild Geese formerly breeding in the English Fens.**—With reference to the note under this heading (p. 383), I may state that I know, or more correctly knew, many of the old gunners, and I have heard from them that in Qui, Waterbeach, Swaffham, and Wicken Fens, Wild Geese were very plentiful about the beginning of the present century, and that they left off breeding there about that date or rather before. This many of my informants had heard from older relatives.—E. T. BOOTH (Brighton).

